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ABSTRACT

A survey of public high school principals asked which policies, programs, and practices designed to improve learning were currently in operation at their schools, and whether these policies were instituted or substantially strengthened in the past 5 years. These policies reflect the school-level recommendations for education reform made in "A Nation at Risk." Results indicated that in general principals did not perceive factors about their teachers, schools, or districts to be major obstacles to the school's improvement. The major obstacles were perceived to be "outside" the school--students and families. About two-thirds of the principals would like greater authority in exchange for greater accountability for their school's educational outcomes. Survey results are displayed on tables, and a copy of the survey questionnaire is included. (JD)

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Bulletin

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May 1988

Public High School Principals' Perceptions of Academic Reform

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In general, principals do not perceive factors about their teachers, schools, or districts to be major obstacles to the school's improvement. The major obstacles are perceived to be "outside" the school--students and families. About two-thirds of principals would like greater authority in exchange for greater accountability for their school's educational outcomes. These are some of the findings from a fall 1987 survey performed under contract with Westat, Inc., for the Center for Education Statistics (CES), U.S. Department of Education, through its Fast Response Survey System (FRSS).[1] The survey was requested by the Research Applications Division of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Public high school principals were surveyed about changes--recommended by the academic reform movement--that have occurred at the school level during the past 5 years. The President asked the Secretary of Education to prepare a report to the Nation on the status of American education 5 years after the release of *A Nation at Risk*.[2] Some of these survey findings are in that report, released in April 1988.

Policies, Programs, and Practices Designed to Improve Learning

Principals were asked which policies, programs, and practices designed to improve learning were in operation at their school in 1987-88, and whether these policies were instituted or last substantially strengthened in 1982-83 or before, or since 1982-83. These policies reflect the school-level recommendations for education reform made in *A Nation at Risk*.

Data Series:
FRSS-31

[1] CES's Fast Response Survey System is a special service that, upon request, quickly obtains, from nationally representative samples, policy-relevant data from short surveys to meet the needs of U.S. Department of Education policy officials.

[2] The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1983.

SP 030 338

U.S. Department of Education
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As shown in table 1, almost all high schools (90 percent or greater) have policies in operation for:

- Strict sanctions for disruptive students (98 percent);[3]
- Minimum academic standards required for participation in athletics (96 percent);
- Special recognition (besides the honor roll) for academically outstanding students (92 percent); and
- Programs to reduce absenteeism or tardiness (90 percent).

Also, about three-quarters of the schools have policies for:

- Instruction of students in study skills (77 percent);
- Required in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time (73 percent);
- Measures to reduce administrative burden on teachers (73 percent); and
- Nonfinancial recognition for outstanding teachers (70 percent).

Policies or guidelines on the amount of required homework are less prevalent (47 percent), while programs of financial recognition for teachers are available in only 20 percent of schools.

Except for one program, about one-half to two-thirds (47 percent to 66 percent) of the schools having a particular policy, program, or practice had instituted or last substantially strengthened policy, program, or practice since 1982-83 (table 1). The exception is programs of financial recognition for outstanding teachers, which were instituted or last substantially strengthened since 1982-83 by 82 percent of the schools with this program.

Proportionately more schools in urban districts than schools in either suburban or rural districts[4] have programs of nonfinancial recognition for teachers and guidelines on amount of required homework (table 2). Larger schools are more likely than smaller schools to have programs of special recognition for academically outstanding students, measures to reduce administrative burden on teachers, guidelines on amount of required homework, and programs of nonfinancial and financial recognition for outstanding teachers.[5]

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[3] Because these estimates are based on a statistical sample, there may be differences between the responses of the sample and those that would result from a survey of the entire population. Standard errors for selected key statistics are in table 12.

[4] The data were analyzed by the following characteristics: district metropolitan status (urban, suburban, and rural), school enrollment (very small: less than 300; small: 300-799; medium: 800-1,499; and large: 1,500 or more), and region (Northeast, Central, Southeast, and West). Findings in the text focus on district metropolitan status and school enrollment. Data by region are presented in the tables for those readers who are interested in this characteristic. The universe size and number of respondents to the survey, by school characteristics, appear in table 13.

[5] Although each size category was not statistically significantly different from each other size category for these items, large schools were always significantly different from very small schools, and the trend was clearly for schools of increasing size to be more likely to have these programs.

Instituting or strengthening policies since 1982-83 was more common for smaller schools than for larger schools. Thus, smaller schools more often than larger schools had recently taken action on their policies concerning strict sanctions for disruptive students, special recognition for academically outstanding students, required in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time, and programs to reduce absenteeism or tardiness (table 2).[6] Proportionately more schools in rural districts than in suburban districts had recently instituted or strengthened policies on strict sanctions for disruptive students. Schools in rural districts were also more likely than schools in either suburban or urban districts to have recently taken action on requirements for in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time.

Obstacles to School Improvement

Principals were asked to rate how much of an obstacle certain factors posed to their school's improvement. The 4-point scale ranged from "Not a problem or obstacle" to "Serious obstacle." The three factors that stand out as posing more serious obstacles to school improvement are (tables 3 and 4):

- Serious family or personal problems of students (66 percent serious or moderate obstacle);
- Student disinterest in learning (53 percent serious or moderate obstacle); and
- Lack of parental support for their children's learning activities (48 percent serious or moderate obstacle).

About one-third of the principals believe community disinterest and nonparticipation, and insufficient principal discretion over financial resources pose a moderate or serious obstacle to their school's improvement. The other factors are not generally viewed as obstacles, with less than one-fourth (3 percent to 23 percent) of principals rating these factors as moderate or serious obstacles at their schools. In general, then, principals do not perceive factors about their teachers, schools, or districts to be obstacles to the school's improvement. The major obstacles are perceived to be "outside" the school--students and families.

Some variations occurred by district metropolitan status. For example, principals of schools in urban districts more frequently believed the following factors were moderate or serious obstacles to their school's improvement than did principals of schools in either suburban or rural districts (table 4):

- Student disinterest in learning;
- Lack of parental support for their children's learning activities;
- Outmoded or insufficient facilities, materials, or equipment;
- Low teacher expectations for student performance;
- Insufficient authority of principal to manage school;

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[6] Although each size category was not statistically significantly different from each other size category for these items, very small schools were always signficantly different from large schools, and the trend was clearly for schools of decreasing size to be more likely to have recently taken action on these programs.

- Restrictive collective bargaining agreements with teachers; and
- Teachers' poor instructional skills.

Insufficient authority of the principal to manage the school was more often judged an obstacle by principals of large schools than by principals of small or very small schools, and restrictive collective bargaining agreements were an obstacle to principals of large schools more often than to principals of any other size school.

Principals' Role in Decisions Affecting the School

Principals were asked to describe the decisionmaking process at their current schools for both the 1982-83 and 1987-88 school years.[7] A 5-point scale was used: district decides with no principal input; district decides with some principal input; district and principal have equal voice in decision; principal decides with some district input; and principal decides with no district input.[8] The question intent was to examine the degree to which decisions are made at the school or at the district level, and the extent of change in the locus of decisionmaking in 5 years.

In general, the locus of decisionmaking did not change much from 1982-83 to 1987-88. In both years, decisions were rarely made by principals with no district input (table 5). Teacher assignment to schools, and distribution and use of funds within the school, were decided by principals in 49 percent of the schools in 1987-88, almost always with some district input. Teacher salaries were usually decided at the district level with no principal input. Teacher bonuses or supplements were not applicable to about one-third of the schools. Among those schools with bonuses or supplements, decisions were usually made at the district level, with no principal input.

District metropolitan status produced differences in the locus of decisionmaking. For example, principals were more likely to control the decisions about student academic performance standards and teacher performance standards in schools in rural and suburban districts than in urban districts (table 6). Teacher assignment to schools was controlled by principals of schools in rural districts more often than by principals of schools in urban districts. Curriculum selection decisions were controlled by principals in 43 percent of schools in rural districts, 32 percent in schools in suburban districts, and 10 percent in schools in urban districts. Distribution and use of funds within the school showed the opposite trend, with principals of schools in rural districts less likely to control these decisions than principals in suburban and urban districts. On the other end of the decisionmaking locus, districts more often controlled decisions about teacher bonuses or supplements in schools in urban districts than in rural districts.

Variations also occurred by school size. Principals more often controlled the decisions about teacher performance standards and in-service training priorities in very small schools than in medium or large schools

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[7] Principals were asked how decisions were made at their current school in 1982-83, regardless of whether they were principals of the school at that time. It was believed that most of the items would be a matter of record, and also that many of the new principals would be familiar with the school through other roles, such as assistant principal or counselor. However, principals were allowed to respond "do not know how decision was made in 1982-83." The "don't know" responses ranged from 11 to 16 percent, and were excluded from the calculation of the percents shown in table 5.

[8] Some of the response categories were collapsed for presentation in tables 6 through 8, and for discussion in the text. "District decides with no principal input" and "district decides with some principal input" were collapsed into "district controls decision." "Principal decides with no district input" and "principal decides with some district input" were collapsed into "principal controls decision."

(table 7). Curriculum selection was more likely to be controlled by principals of very small and small schools than of medium and large schools. Distribution and use of funds within the school showed the opposite trend, with principals of very small schools less likely to control decisions in this area than principals of small, medium, and large schools. Districts more often controlled decisions about teacher bonuses or supplements in large schools than in very small schools.

Principals' Interest in Greater Authority

About two-thirds (65 percent) of principals would like greater authority in exchange for greater accountability for their school's educational outcomes (table 9). About one-third (35 percent) of principals do not want greater authority in exchange for greater accountability for their school's educational outcomes. Of those principals who would like more authority, about 60 percent want more control over teacher performance standards, and the distribution and use of funds within the school. About half (48 percent to 54 percent) want more authority over teacher bonuses or supplements, student academic performance standards, teacher assignment to schools, inservice training priorities, curriculum selection, and nonfinancial recognition of teachers. Comparatively few (31 percent) principals want more control over teacher salaries.

Wanting greater authority in general is particularly strong among principals of schools in urban districts: 87 percent would like greater authority, compared with 67 percent of principals of schools in suburban districts, and 59 percent in rural districts (table 9). Principals of large schools more often want greater authority than principals of small and very small schools.

Wanting greater authority in decisionmaking areas varied. For example, on teacher assignment to schools, 81 percent of principals of schools in urban districts want more authority, compared with only about half of principals of schools in suburban and rural districts (table 9). Principals of medium and large schools more often want greater authority over teacher assignment than principals of small and very small schools.

Proportionately more principals of schools in urban and rural districts than in suburban districts want more authority over student academic performance standards (table 9). Greater authority over teacher performance standards is wanted more often by principals of schools in urban districts than in suburban districts.

Principals' interest in greater authority was related in some areas to who currently controlled the decision. For teacher assignment to the school, curriculum selection, and distribution and use of funds within the school, principals were more likely to want greater authority if the district currently controlled the decisions than if the principal controlled the decisions (not shown in tables). However, for teacher bonuses or supplements, principals who currently controlled the decision wanted additional authority more often than did principals where districts controlled the decisions. Teacher salaries were almost never controlled by principals, and few principals wanted to control this decision. In the remaining decision areas, interest in greater authority was not related to who currently controlled the decisions.

Allocation of Time in 1982-83 Compared to 1987-88

Principals were asked whether, compared to 1982-83, they currently spend less, about the same, or more time on certain aspects of their job.[9] Few principals spend less time on any aspects of their job in 1987-88 than they did in 1982-83 (table 10). The three areas in which principals spend much more time now than earlier are teacher observation and feedback (47 percent); work after school hours (44 percent); and administrative record-keeping (43 percent).

Principals of schools in rural districts were more likely to spend somewhat more or much more time on administrative record-keeping than principals of schools in suburban districts, and more time on curriculum development than principals of schools in urban districts (table 11). Proportionately more principals of schools in rural and urban districts than suburban districts spend more time on work after school hours. Parent and community relations showed a different pattern, with principals of schools in rural districts less likely to spend more time on this aspect of their job than principals of schools in urban districts.

Variations also occurred by school size. For example, principals of very small and small schools indicated more often than principals of large schools that they spend more time on curriculum development. Proportionately more principals of very small schools than of small, medium, or large schools said they currently spend more time on student assessment than they did in 1982-83.

Survey Methodology and Data Reliability

In October 1987, questionnaires (see attached) were mailed to a national probability sample of 930 public high schools from a universe of approximately 14,500. For the purposes of this survey, a public high school was defined as any regular public school with a principal and enrollment in grade 12, and without any pupils below grade 7.[10] The data were collected by mail with telephone followup. The questionnaires were completed by the high school principal. Data collection was completed in December with a response rate of 98 percent. The sampling frame used for the survey was the 1985-86 Common Core of Data Universe of Public Schools.

States were classified by patterns of academic reforms. With six reforms (high school graduation requirements, high school graduation examination, initial teacher certification, State revenue increased 40 percent from 1982-83 to 1987-88, merit pay for teachers, and career ladder for teachers), each of which might be present or absent, 64 patterns were theoretically possible. In fact, 27 patterns occurred, and each of the 27 was used as a stratum. The sampling rates within strata were set so that each individual reform was present in at least 250 and at most 700 sampled schools. The variability in the weights across strata was minimized subject to this restriction. Within each stratum, the sample was drawn with probability proportionate to the square root of school enrollment, with a minimum enrollment of 50 used for each school. The survey data were weighted using the inverse of the probability of selection as the weights, and were adjusted for nonresponse. The nonresponse adjustment was done by stratum within school size category.

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[9] Respondents who were not principals in the 1982-83 school year, either at the current school or another public school in the State, skipped this item, since the item asked for a comparison of how the principal personally spent his or her time now compared to the 1982-83 school year. This screening resulted in 37 percent of the principals not responding to this item.

[10] The exception to this rule was the few schools encountered that were combined middle schools and high schools, teaching grades 6 through 12. These schools were included as high schools, since they are similar to the combined junior-senior high schools teaching grades 7 through 12.

Since the estimates were from a sample of schools, they are subject to sampling variability. For this reason, numbers in the tables and text have been rounded. Percentages have been calculated based on the actual estimates rather than the rounded values. The standard error is a measure of the variability due to sampling when estimating a statistic. It indicates how much variability there is in the population of possible estimates of a parameter for a given sample size. Standard errors can be used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. If all possible samples were surveyed under similar conditions, intervals of 1.96 standard errors below to 1.96 standard errors above a particular statistic would include the true population parameter being estimated in about 95 percent of the samples. This is a 95 percent confidence interval. For example, the estimated percentage of schools with required in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time for all schools is 73 percent and the estimated standard error is 1.6. The 95 percent confidence interval for this statistic extends from 73 - (1.6 times 1.96) to 73 + (1.6 times 1.96), or from 70 to 76 percent. This means one can be 95 percent confident that this interval contains the true population value.

Estimates of standard errors for the estimates were computed using a replication technique known as jackknife replication. Some key statistics and their estimated standard errors are in table 12. These standard errors reflect the complex nature of the sample design. The effect of the sample design upon a particular standard error is often called a "design effect." Further details about design effects and standard errors for statistics not included in these tables can be obtained upon request.

Relationships between variables with 2 or more levels have been tested using chi-square tests at the .05 level of significance, adjusted for average design effect. If the overall chi-square test was significant, it was followed up with tests using a Bonferroni *t* statistic, which maintained an overall 95 percent confidence level or better.

Some of the variables used to classify schools are correlated (such as school size and district metropolitan status). The sample size in this survey limits our ability to understand the full multivariate nature of the responses by these correlated classification variables.

Survey estimates are also subject to errors of reporting and errors made in the collection of the data. These errors, called nonsampling errors, can sometimes result in biases. While general sampling theory can be used to determine how to estimate the sampling variability of a statistic, the measurement of nonsampling errors usually requires that an experiment be conducted as part of the data collection procedures or the use of data external to the study.

Nonsampling errors may include such things as differences in the respondents' interpretation of the meaning of the questions, differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted, or errors in data preparation. During the design of the survey and survey pretest, an effort was made to check for consistency of interpretation of questions and to eliminate ambiguous items. The questionnaire was pretested with respondents like those who completed the survey, and the questionnaire and instructions were extensively reviewed by CES and the Committee for Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS) of the Council of Chief State School Officers. Manual and machine editing of the questionnaires was conducted to check the data for accuracy and consistency, and extensive data retrieval was performed on missing or inconsistent items. The survey had a high response rate (98 percent), and item nonresponse was 1 percent or less on every item. These are steps that were taken to ensure that nonsampling errors would not severely bias the results from this survey.

Data are presented for all schools and by the following characteristics: school enrollment, district metropolitan status, and region. Metropolitan status is defined as follows: urban districts are those in central cities within an MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area); suburban districts are those within an MSA, but outside a central city; rural districts are all other districts outside an MSA. Region classifications are those used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the National Education Association. The Northeast comprises Connecticut, Delaware, the

District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Central region comprises Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Southeast comprises Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The West comprises Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

The survey was performed under contract with Westat, Inc., using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). Westat's Project Director was Elizabeth Farris, and the Survey Manager was Laurie Lewis. Helen Ashwick was the CES Project Officer, and Tongsoo Song was the CES Survey Manager. The OERI data requester, who participated in the design and analyses, was Lois Peak. FRSS was established by CES to collect quickly, and with minimum burden on respondents, small quantities of data needed for education planning and policy.

For More Information

For information about this survey or the Fast Response Survey System, contact Helen Ashwick, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Center for Education Statistics, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20208, telephone (202) 357-6325. For information about OERI programs and activities, contact Information Services at (800) 424-1616.

Table 1.--Percent of high schools having various policies, programs, and practices in operation in their schools in 1987-88, and of those having a particular policy, program, or practice whether they were instituted or last substantially strengthened in 1982-83 or before, or since 1982-83: United States, 1987-88

Policy, program, or practice	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last substantially strengthened:	
		In 1982-83 or before	Since 1982-83
Strict sanctions for disruptive students	98	51	49
Minimum academic standards required for participation in athletics	96	53	47
Special recognition for academically outstanding students (besides honor roll)	92	41	59
Program to reduce absenteeism or tardiness	90	34	66
Instruction of students in study skills	77	39	61
Required in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time	73	35	65
Measures to reduce administrative burden on teachers	73	37	63
Nonfinancial recognition for outstanding teachers	70	46	54
Policy/guidelines on amount of required homework	47	48	52
Financial recognition for outstanding teachers	20	18	82

NOTE.--The universe size and number of respondents to the survey, by school characteristics, appear in table 13.

Table 2.--Percent of high schools having various policies, programs, and practices in operation in their schools in 1987-88, and of those having a particular policy, program, or practice, whether it was instituted or last substantially strengthened since 1982-83, by school characteristics: United States, 1987-88 (continued on next page)

School characteristic	Strict sanctions for disruptive students		Minimum academic standards required for participation in athletics		Special recognition for academically outstanding students (besides honor roll)		Program to reduce absenteeism or tardiness		Instruction of students in study skills	
	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83
Total	98	49	96	47	92	59	90	66	77	61
District metropolitan status										
Rural	98	55	97	44	91	62	91	68	76	61
Suburban	99	40	96	49	93	55	88	63	76	60
Urban	95	51	97	53	97	57	96	68	84	66
School enrollment										
Less than 300	97	62	96	43	87	66	90	72	72	69
300 - 799	97	49	96	44	92	57	89	64	78	63
800 - 1,499	98	42	97	53	96	60	91	65	77	54
1,500 or more	98	37	96	51	97	50	95	58	83	55
Region										
Northeast	98	47	91	47	93	43	88	68	77	52
Central	97	41	96	32	91	59	86	59	81	57
Southeast	98	50	99	50	98	62	95	65	77	61
West	98	60	98	61	90	66	93	73	72	72

NOTE.--The universe size and number of respondents to the survey, by school characteristics, appear in table 13.

Table 2.--Percent of high schools having various policies, programs, and practices in operation in their schools in 1987-88, and of those having a particular policy, program, or practice, whether it was instituted or last substantially strengthened since 1982-83, by school characteristics: United States, 1987-88 (continued from previous page)

School characteristic	Strict sanctions for disruptive students		Minimum academic standards required for participation in athletics		Special recognition for academically outstanding students (besides honor roll)		Program to reduce absenteeism or tardiness		Instruction of students in study skills	
	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83	In operation in 1987-88	Instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83
Total	73	65	73	63	70	54	47	52	20	82
District metropolitan status										
Rural	76	71	69	67	66	54	42	50	17	79
Suburban	68	59	77	59	72	54	48	50	21	87
Urban	75	53	74	63	85	56	65	63	25	80
School enrollment										
Less than 300	77	75	66	67	56	54	38	47	18	75
300 - 799	72	63	72	59	73	56	47	59	17	81
800 - 1,499	72	59	74	70	75	56	50	47	19	92
1,500 or more	68	56	82	55	85	48	58	52	29	83
Region										
Northeast	58	60	75	64	67	59	58	44	10	73
Central	67	62	69	52	61	50	32	46	9	90
Southeast	90	62	74	73	79	54	55	64	20	77
West	75	72	75	68	77	56	51	51	37	83

NOTE.--The universe size and number of respondents to the survey, by school characteristics, appear in table 13.

Table 3.--Percent of high school principals indicating how severe an obstacle various factors are to their schools' improvement: United States, 1987-88

Factor	Not a problem or obstacle	Minor obstacle	Moderate obstacle	Serious obstacle
Serious family or personal problems of students	3	32	44	22
Student disinterest in learning	7	40	39	15
Lack of parental support for their children's learning activities	15	36	32	17
Community disinterest and nonparticipation	31	32	26	11
Insufficient principal discretion over financial resources	33	33	24	10
Lack of district support for school's needs and activities	49	28	17	6
Outmoded or insufficient facilities, materials, or equipment	46	32	15	7
Low teacher expectations for student performance	36	43	18	3
Insufficient authority of principal to manage school	55	25	14	6
Restrictive collective bargaining agreements with teachers*	51	27	11	8
Teachers' poor instructional skills	45	43	10	2
Low teacher and staff morale	47	41	10	3
Inefficient teacher classroom management procedures	36	53	10	1
Undemanding curriculum	57	33	8	2
Teachers' inadequate knowledge in subjects taught	64	32	3	1
Unsafe or disorderly environment	78	19	2	1

*An additional 5 percent indicated this item was not applicable to their school.

NOTE.--Percents may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 4.--Percent of high school principals indicating that various factors are a moderate or severe obstacle to their school's improvement, by school characteristics: United States, 1987-88

Factor	Total	District metropolitan status			School enrollment				Region			
		Rural	Suburban	Urban	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or more	Northeast	Central	Southeast	West
Serious family or personal problems of students	66	65	64	76	66	66	67	63	72	62	59	72
Student disinterest in learning	53	54	48	68	57	54	49	53	47	50	63	54
Lack of parental support for their children's learning activities	48	50	42	66	45	53	47	48	39	42	59	54
Community disinterest and nonparticipation	37	41	28	51	38	39	35	33	36	34	41	39
Insufficient principal discretion over financial resources	34	31	34	44	26	34	38	39	35	34	35	31
Lack of district support for school's needs and activities	23	22	23	28	16	23	29	26	28	17	31	21
Outmoded or insufficient facilities, materials, or equipment	22	21	19	35	19	22	21	26	26	17	19	26
Low teacher expectations for student performance	21	21	17	33	18	21	23	24	25	19	24	18
Insufficient authority of principal to manage school	20	16	20	38	14	18	23	31	26	16	22	19
Restrictive collective bargaining agreements with teachers	18	14	18	36	14	14	20	32	27	22	7	16
Teachers' poor instructional skills	12	12	10	24	13	11	13	12	14	8	13	16
Low teacher and staff morale	12	12	10	19	15	10	12	13	16	9	12	14
Inefficient teacher classroom management procedures	11	12	8	17	11	10	11	13	12	12	12	9
Undemanding curriculum	10	11	8	13	9	11	11	7	12	9	11	8
Teachers' inadequate knowledge in subjects taught	4	3	4	8	3	3	5	7	7	2	4	4
Unsafe or disorderly environment	3	3	2	8	1	3	3	6	5	2	3	3

Table 5.--Percent of high school principals indicating how decisions are made on various issues in their current school in 1982-83 and 1987-88: United States, 1987-88

Issue	District decides with no principal input		District decides with some principal input		District and principal have equal voice in decision		Principal decides with some district input		Principal decides with no district input	
	1982-83	1987-88	1982-83	1987-88	1982-83	1987-88	1982-83	1987-88	1982-83	1987-88
Teacher assignment to your school	10	6	23	19	21	24	33	38	12	11
Distribution and use of funds within the school	15	10	25	27	16	14	31	36	13	13
Nonfinancial recognition of teachers	12	11	18	16	22	22	20	24	12	14
Curriculum selection	8	4	25	25	32	34	28	32	5	4
Student academic performance standards	6	4	23	21	37	39	24	28	7	6
Teacher performance standards	9	6	28	25	30	34	22	26	9	8
Inservice training priorities	12	5	30	27	31	34	19	28	6	6
Teacher bonuses or supplements	45	41	14	19	3	5	1	2	1	1
Teacher salaries	76	71	18	22	3	4	*	*	*	*

*Less than 0.5 percent.

NOTE.--There was an additional response option, "not applicable to this district or school." For most issues, this option was selected by 3 percent or fewer of the respondents. The exceptions are "teacher bonuses or supplements," where "not applicable" was selected by 36 percent in 1982-83 and by 32 percent in 1987-88, and "nonfinancial recognition of teachers," where "not applicable" was selected by 16 percent in 1982-83 and by 13 percent in 1987-88. In addition, principals were allowed to respond "do not know how decision was made in 1982-83." The "don't know" responses ranged from 11 to 16 percent, and were excluded from the calculation of the percents in this table.

Table 6.--Percent of high school principals indicating how decisions are made on various issues in their school in 1987-88, by district metropolitan status: United States, 1987-88

Issue	District controls decision				District and principal have equal voice in decision				Principal controls decision			
	Total	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Total	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Total	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Teacher assignment to your school	26	23	24	45	24	24	25	18	49	52	48	37
Distribution and use of funds within the school	36	43	28	31	14	13	18	9	49	44	54	60
Nonfinancial recognition of teachers	27	28	26	29	22	22	21	25	38	36	41	38
Curriculum selection	29	22	32	61	34	34	35	29	36	43	32	10
Student academic performance standards	26	20	25	58	39	42	37	28	34	36	37	12
Teacher performance standards	31	25	34	51	34	36	32	27	33	36	32	22
Inservice training priorities	32	29	33	41	34	36	33	29	33	35	33	29
Teacher bonuses or supplements	60	57	61	70	5	7	4	2	3	3	4	5
Teacher salaries	93	92	93	97	4	5	4	*	1	1	*	*

*Less than 0.5 percent.

NOTE.--There was an additional response option, "not applicable to this district or school." For most issues, this option was selected by 3 percent or fewer of the respondents. The exceptions are "teacher bonuses or supplements," where "not applicable" was selected by 24 to 34 percent of respondents and "nonfinancial recognition of teachers, where "not applicable" was selected by 9 to 15 percent of respondents. Percents may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 7.--Percent of high school principals indicating how decisions are made on various issues in their school in 1987-88, by school enrollment: United States, 1987-88

Issue	District controls decision					District and principal have equal voice in decision					Principal controls decision				
	Total	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or more	Total	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or more	Total	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or more
Teacher assignment to your school	26	22	20	31	35	24	23	26	27	17	49	54	52	41	48
Distribution and use of funds within the school	36	54	33	29	22	14	13	17	14	12	49	33	50	57	66
Nonfinancial recognition of teachers	27	23	30	29	27	22	20	21	24	23	38	36	39	36	43
Curriculum selection	29	25	18	39	47	34	34	36	34	30	36	41	45	27	21
Student academic performance standards	26	18	24	28	41	39	46	36	37	34	34	34	39	34	24
Teacher performance standards	31	24	29	34	45	34	33	37	35	29	33	41	33	30	25
Inservice training priorities	32	21	29	39	46	34	33	37	35	29	33	45	33	26	23
Teacher bonuses or supplements	60	50	63	62	67	5	7	6	4	1	3	2	3	3	6
Teacher salaries	93	89	95	92	97	4	6	4	3	2	1	1		*	*

*Less than 0.5 percent.

NOTE.--There was an additional response option, "not applicable to this district or school." For most issues, this option was selected by 5 percent or fewer of the respondents. The exceptions are "teacher bonuses or supplements," where "not applicable" was selected by 25 to 41 percent of respondents and "nonfinancial recognition of teachers," where "not applicable" was selected by 7 to 21 percent of respondents. Percents may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 8.--Percent of high school principals indicating how decisions are made on various issues in their school in 1987-88, by region: United States, 1987-88

Issue	District controls decision					District and principal have equal voice in decision					Principal controls decision				
	Total	Northeast	Central	Southeast	West	Total	Northeast	Central	Southeast	West	Total	Northeast	Central	Southeast	West
Teacher assignment to your school	26	31	22	34	21	24	32	25	22	20	49	35	50	44	59
Distribution and use of funds within the school	36	29	46	23	39	14	18	14	16	12	49	53	40	61	49
Nonfinancial recognition of teachers	27	27	24	37	23	22	24	19	23	23	38	37	39	33	41
Curriculum selection	29	27	19	37	37	34	28	37	30	36	36	44	43	31	26
Student academic performance standards	26	24	16	37	30	39	30	45	37	38	34	45	38	25	30
Teacher performance standards	31	27	25	38	35	34	33	36	30	35	33	39	38	29	28
Inservice training priorities	32	41	28	38	27	34	30	32	37	37	33	29	39	26	34
Teacher bonuses or supplements	60	57	54	70	60	5	0	2	8	11	3	2	*	5	6
Teacher salaries	93	96	95	91	90	4	2	4	4	5	1	*	*	*	1

*Less than 0.5 percent.

NOTE.--There was an additional response option, "not applicable to this district or school." For most issues, this option was selected by 5 percent or fewer of the respondents. The exceptions are "teacher bonuses or supplements," where "not applicable" was selected by 17 to 44 percent of respondents and "nonfinancial recognition of teachers," where "not applicable" was selected by 7 to 11 percent of respondents. Percents may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 9.--Percent of principals who would like greater authority in exchange for greater accountability for their school's educational outcomes, and the percent of principals who would like greater authority in each area, by school characteristics: United States, 1987-88

School characteristic	Would like greater authority in exchange for greater accountability	Would like greater authority in								
		Teacher performance standards	Distribution and use of funds within the school	Teacher bonuses or supplements	Student academic performance standards	Teacher assignment to your school	Inservice training priorities	Curriculum selection	Nonfinancial recognition of teachers	Teacher salaries
Total	65	60	59	54	53	53	52	48	48	31
District metropolitan status										
Rural	59	64	59	54	58	48	50	44	51	34
Suburban	67	54	58	54	45	50	52	50	44	28
Urban	87	65	62	56	59	81	62	54	51	25
School enrollment										
Less than 300	61	62	64	50	54	47	49	47	56	31
300 - 799	61	62	55	58	55	44	49	41	46	37
800 - 1,499	68	58	60	52	53	64	58	55	46	27
1,500 or more	73	57	56	60	47	63	55	50	43	25
Region										
Northeast	71	54	50	52	47	54	56	36	41	30
Central	61	60	64	57	51	52	51	49	49	33
Southeast	61	66	59	60	62	61	43	47	55	38
West	68	59	59	49	53	49	58	54	48	24

NOTE.--The percent of principals who would like greater authority in each area is based on the number of principals who indicated they would like greater authority in general in exchange for greater accountability.

Table 10.--Percent of high school principals indicating they spend less, about the same, or more time on various aspects of their job in 1987-88 than they did in 1982-83: United States, 1987-88

Aspect of principal's job	Much less time	Somewhat less time	About the same amount of time	Somewhat more time	Much more time
Teacher observation and feedback	1	4	17	31	47
Work after school hours	*	2	23	31	44
Administrative record-keeping	3	7	21	26	43
Curriculum development	3	8	37	32	20
Parent and community relations	1	4	43	36	16
Teacher meetings and management	2	7	41	33	18
School system interaction	1	7	50	26	16
Student assessment	2	9	49	27	14
Interaction with students	5	12	43	26	14
Budget management	4	13	52	22	10

*Less than 0.5 percent.

NOTE.--Responses to this item include only principals who were principals in the 1982-83 school year, either at the current school or another public school in the State. This screening resulted in 37 percent of the principals in the survey not responding to this item. Percents may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 11.--Percent of high school principals indicating they spend somewhat more or much more time on various aspects of their job in 1987-88 than they did in 1982-83, by school characteristics: United States, 1987-88

Aspect of principal's job	Total	District metropolitan status			School enrollment				Region			
		Rural	Suburban	Urban	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or or more	Northeast	Central	Southeast	West
Teacher observation and feedback	78	79	76	81	86	75	77	75	64	77	83	83
Work after school hours	75	80	66	85	72	79	78	68	62	76	82	76
Administrative record-keeping	69	75	61	70	72	75	67	55	65	67	75	68
Curriculum development	52	57	48	38	61	58	44	37	44	56	50	52
Parent and community relations	52	46	56	67	49	46	59	57	54	52	49	54
Teacher meetings and management	51	51	48	61	45	57	53	46	60	45	60	45
School system interaction	42	39	42	55	45	39	42	44	39	37	44	50
Student assessment	41	42	37	44	52	37	37	34	31	39	44	46
Interaction with students	40	40	38	49	43	37	45	35	43	38	38	43
Budget management	32	29	33	42	30	30	36	32	34	30	26	39

NOTE.–Responses to this item include only principals who were principals in the 1982-83 school year, either at the current school or another public school in the State. This screening resulted in 37 percent of the principals in the survey not responding to this item.

Table 12.--Standard errors for key statistics

Item	Total	Metropolitan status			Enrollment size			
		Rural	Suburban	Urban	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or more
Percent having policies, programs, and practices								
Special recognition for academically outstanding students	1.3	1.7	2.2	1.9	3.6	1.7	1.0	0.9
Nonfinancial recognition for outstanding teachers	2.1	2.7	2.5	3.8	5.9	2.4	2.6	2.5
Policy/guidelines on amount of required homework	1.6	2.5	2.9	4.4	2.8	2.8	3.5	2.7
Financial recognition for outstanding teachers	1.2	2.0	2.0	3.3	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2
Percent instituted or last strengthened since 1982-83								
Required in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time	1.8	2.3	3.9	6.1	3.6	3.0	3.5	4.3
Strict sanctions for disruptive students	1.9	2.6	3.0	5.4	4.7	3.1	3.9	3.8
Financial recognition for outstanding teachers	3.7	6.0	4.6	7.5	8.5	7.3	4.1	5.1
Percent indicating factors are moderate or severe obstacles								
Serious family or personal problems of students	1.3	2.6	2.9	3.7	4.2	3.1	2.9	3.1
Lack of parental support for their children's learning activities	1.9	2.9	3.2	4.6	5.1	3.3	3.5	2.7
Insufficient principal discretion over financial resources	2.2	3.0	3.0	5.6	4.6	3.4	2.6	4.1
Insufficient authority of principal to manage school	1.4	2.1	2.2	4.7	3.0	2.0	2.6	2.7

Table 12.--Standard errors for key statistics (continued)

Item	Total	Metropolitan status			Enrollment size			
		Rural	Suburban	Urban	Less than 300	300-799	800-1,499	1,500 or more
Percent indicating that principal controls the decisions								
Teacher assignment to your school	2.1	3.3	3.3	5.1	5.4	2.9	3.8	4.1
Teacher performance standards	2.0	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.9	2.2	3.0	2.8
Percent indicating that district controls the decisions								
Teacher salaries	1.0	1.7	1.2	1.6	2.9	1.4	1.8	1.1
Teacher bonuses or supplements	1.7	1.9	3.2	4.5	4.6	3.6	3.6	2.4
Curriculum selection	1.7	2.4	2.2	3.9	3.8	2.3	3.2	3.5
Percent of principals who would like greater authority	1.7	2.2	2.6	3.4	3.5	3.1	2.9	2.9
Percent of principals who would like greater authority in certain areas								
Teacher performance standards	2.2	3.8	3.0	3.2	4.5	3.8	4.1	3.4
Curriculum selection	2.7	5.0	3.2	4.9	7.3	3.8	3.8	5.0
Teacher salaries	2.6	3.7	3.8	4.8	6.2	3.6	4.0	3.2
Percent indicating they spend more time on aspects of their job								
Teacher observation and feedback	2.1	3.3	3.7	5.2	4.3	4.2	3.2	4.3
Teacher meetings and management	2.3	3.5	4.1	5.8	6.3	3.9	3.1	3.4
Budget management	2.3	3.2	3.4	5.4	5.8	3.8	3.8	4.4

Table 13.--Universe size and number of respondents to the survey of public high school principals, by school characteristics: United States, 1987-88

	Universe	Respondents
Total	14,451	912
District metropolitan status		
Rural	7,602	391
Suburban	5,373	380
Urban	1,477	141
School enrollment		
Less than 300	4,138	141
300-799	4,645	260
800-1,499	3,573	280
1,500 or more	2,095	231
Region		
Northeast	2,283	127
Central	4,881	274
Southeast	3,057	205
West	4,230	306

NOTE.--Respondents to this survey were public high school principals. For the purposes of this survey, a public high school was defined as any regular public school with a principal and enrollment in grade 12, and without any pupils below grade 7.

FAST RESPONSE SURVEY SYSTEM (FRSS)

CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20208-1628

Form Approved
OMB No. 1850-0612
App. Exp. 7/88

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC REFORM

This report is authorized by law (20 U.S.C. 1221e-1). While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely.

1. a. In what school year did you begin your position as principal of this school? 19___ - 19___

   b. At the end of this school year, how many years will you have been a principal in this and other public schools in your State? Exclude years as an assistant principal. _____ years

2. Listed below are a number of strategies designed to improve learning. In **Section A**, indicate which of the policies, programs, and practices your school has in operation in 1987-88 by checking "yes" or "no" in the appropriate columns.

   In **Section B**, indicate whether the policy, program, or practice in operation in 1987-88 was instituted or last substantially strengthened (whichever is more recent) in 1982-83 or before, or since 1982-83 by checking the appropriate columns.

Policy, Program, Practice	A. In operation in 1987-88		B. Instituted or last substantially strengthened	
	Yes	No	In 1982-83 or before	Since 1982-83
a. Strict sanctions for disruptive students				
b. Required in-service training of teachers in effective use of class time				
c. Instruction of students in study skills				
d. Policy/guidelines on amount of required homework				
e. Minimum academic standards required for participation in athletics				
f. Special recognition for academically outstanding students (besides honor roll)				
g. Financial recognition for outstanding teachers				
h. Nonfinancial recognition for outstanding teachers				
i. Program to reduce absenteeism or tardiness				
j. Measures to reduce administrative burden on teachers				

3. How much of an obstacle do you believe each of the following factors poses to your school's improvement? Use the following scale:
   0 = Not a problem or obstacle; 1 = Minor obstacle; 2 = Moderate obstacle; 3 = Serious obstacle.

   a. Insufficient authority of principal to manage school (e.g., to set rules for students or make personnel decisions about teachers) ___
   b. Insufficient principal discretion over financial resources. ___
   c. Lack of district support for school's needs and activities ___
   d. Community disinterest and nonparticipation ___
   e. Teachers' poor instructional skills ___
   f. Teachers' inadequate knowledge in subject taught ___
   g. Lack of parental support for the school's learning activities ___
   h. Low teacher expectations for student performance ___
   i. Undemanding curriculum ___
   j. Ineffective teacher classroom management procedures ___
   k. Student disinterest in learning ___
   l. Serious family or personal problems of students ___
   m. Unsafe or disorderly environment ___
   n. Outmoded or insufficient facilities, materials, or equipment ___
   o. Low teacher and staff morale ___
   p. Restrictive collective bargaining agreements with teachers ___

4. To the extent that you or your district have a role in making the following decisions, how would you describe the decision-making process at your current school? In **Section A**, indicate how decisions were made in **1982-83**. In **Section B**, indicate how decisions are made in **1987-88**. Use the following scale:
   1 = District decides with no principal input;
   2 = District decides with some principal input;
   3 = District and principal have equal voice in decision;
   4 = Principal decides with some district input;
   5 = Principal decides with no district input;
   DK = Do not know how decision was made in 1982-83;
   NA = Not applicable to this district or school.

	A. 1982-83	B. 1987-88		A. 1982-83	B. 1987-88
a. Teacher salaries	___	___	f. Teacher assignment to your school	___	___
b. Teacher bonuses or supplements	___	___	g. Inservice training priorities	___	___
c. Nonfinancial recognition of teachers	___	___	h. Curriculum selection	___	___
d. Teacher performance standards	___	___	i. Distribution and use of funds within the school	___	___
e. Student academic performance standards	___	___			

5a. In areas such as those listed in item 4, would you like greater authority in exchange for greater accountability for your school's educational outcomes? [ ] Yes (GO TO 5b); [ ] No (SKIP TO ITEM 6)

b. In which areas in item 4 would greater authority be most useful? List the letters for these areas here: _____

(IF YOU WERE NOT A PRINCIPAL IN THE 1982-83 SCHOOL YEAR, EITHER AT THIS SCHOOL OR ANOTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL IN YOUR STATE, SKIP TO ITEM 7.)

6. Compared to the 1982-83 school year, do you spend less, about the same, or more time on the following aspects of your job? Use the following scale:
   1 = Much less time; 2 = Somewhat less time; 3 = About the same amount of time; 4 = Somewhat more time; 5 = Much more time.

   a. Teacher meetings and management ___
   b. Teacher observation and feedback ___
   c. Curriculum development ___
   d. Student assessment ___
   e. Interaction with students ___
   f. Parent and community relations ___
   g. School system interaction ___
   h. Budget management ___
   i. Administrative record-keeping ___
   j. Work after school hours ___

7. Name: _____ Title: _____

   School: _____ State: _____ Phone: (_____) _____

CES Form No. 2379-31, 10/87

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